Conservation of wetlands in Kerala

2832. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to undertake an action plan for conservation of Ashtamudi-Sasthamcotha wetlands in Kerala;

(b) if so, the objects of the projects and by when it is likely to be completed;

(c) whether any fund has been released for the same; and

(d) the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) Two wetlands *viz* Ashtamudi and Sasthamkota have been identified from Kerala under National Wetlands Conservation Programme Management action plans at a total cost of Rs. 11.33 crore for Ashtamudi and Rs. 3.07 crore for Sasthamkota wetlands were received from the State Government for financial assistance. Amounts of Rs. 33.33 lakhs for Ashtamudi and Rs. 12.12 lakhs for Sasthamkota wetlands were released to State Government for catchment area treatment, fisheries development, pollution abatement, weed control, and people's participation during 2000-2001. Due to non-release of money to the implementing agencies by the State Government work could not be initiated and the entire amount had to be revalidated for next financial year.

The State Steering Committee, at its first meeting held on 25th March, 2002, decided to the fine tune the management plans through inputs of all the departments concerned, formulate a task force for advice and release funds to the District Collector for implementation of conservation measures.

Processing of fruits and vegetables

2833. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that while India is one of the world's largest producers of fruits and vegetables, only two to four per cent of the total commercial horticulture produce of fruits and vegetables is

actually processed, as the quality of their available varieties is reportedly not suitable for processing; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken to improve availability of processable grade fruit and vegetable varieties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (PROF. CHAMAN LAL GUPTA): (a) and (b) Many reasons including non-availability of processable varieties are responsible for low levels of processing of fruits and vegetables. While the Ministry of Food Processing Industries through its plan schemes facilitates higher processing, the requirements of specific varieties of fruits and vegetables are posed to the appropriate institutions in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Terrorist activities in universities

†2834. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that terrorist activities are spreading rapidly in universities of the country;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any steps to prevent these activities; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) to (c) There is nothing to suggest that terrorist activities are rapidly spreading in the universities in India. There are, however, some cases in which terrorist activities have come to notice in universities. According to the information received from the Ministry of Home Affairs, "Public Order" and "Police" being State subject, it is for the concerned State Government to devise various methods and take concrete steps to counter terrorist activities in the States. Government has adopted a well coordinated and multi-pronged approach for tackling the activities of militants.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.